STEAM-BOAT PIERS AND THAMES EMBANKMENT.

Last week Mr. Deputy Hicks moved the Court of Common Council to agree to the report made by the Navigation Committee on the subject of the existing steam-boat piers between London-bridge and Chelsea. The report stated that the committee had directed a survey to be made by Mr. Walker, the civil engineer, by Mr. Leech, the clerk of the City works, and by the water-bailiff, and that those gentlemen had certified that those piers were in general unsafe, and impeded the navigation of the river. They were for the most part as unsafe as had been that at Blackfriars'-bridge at the time the recent fatal accident happened. The committee also stated that they had been furnished with a plan on which those piers ought to be constructed, the expense of erecting each of which would be about 1,750*l*. The committee added that they had caused notices to be served upon the owners and proprietors of the present piers, calling upon them to construct them on the plan furnished, and according to the regulations of the committee, or that they would be removed. If the notice were not complied with, the licences granted to private individuals to erect piers would be withdrawn.

Mr. R. L. Jones hoped the court would not agree to this report. There were in perspective two great measures which approached consummation, which the recommendations of this report, if carried into effect, would interfere with. He alluded to the projected embankment from Blackfriars'-bridge to Westminster, and again from Westminster-bridge to Chelsea. To the first proposition (to effect which the bill was actually printed) this court had assented, provided the government carried the plan into execution at its own expense; and he submitted, that pending the matter, parties ought not to be permitted or encouraged to erect these landing-places along the very line the embankment was proposed to be carried. The government ought not to be interfered with in the matter. He also contended that neither the committee nor the court had the power to grant licences for the erection of these piers. The right to the soil of the river was a question now pending between the Crown and the corporation in the Court of Chancery. The report of the Navigation Committee was ultimately agreed to by a large majority, only three hands being held up against it.

IMPORTANT TO SURVEYORS OF HIGHWAYS.

The decision in the following case which was tried, on the 27th ult., in the Queen's Bench, will, we hope, operate as a caution to surveyors of the highways to abandon the practice, so prevalent, of leaving heaps of materials for mending the roads, and of scrapings of mud from the roads, in such situations as to endanger travellers. It will shew the public that the practice is illegal and may be prevented.

DAVIS *v.* CURLING.

This was an action against the surveyor of the highways of the parish of Tottenham, to recover damages for the consequences of an accident which had been occasioned, as was alleged, by his neglect. The plaintiff on the 1st January, 1843, drove from Lambeth to Tottenham in a one-horse chaise, accompanied by his wife, to the house of a Mr. Newstone, where he remained to supper. On his return home his gig was upset in Marsh-lane, in consequence of driving over a heap of gravel, the gig being broken to pieces, and Davies and his wife both seriously injured. The former was confined to bed for three weeks, and was for six weeks disabled from attending to business. It appeared that on each side of the lane there is a track of greensward, on which it is customary to place heaps of gravel for the repair of the road, where they are left until they are required. The heap in question extended from the greensward into the road. Several of the plaintiff's witnesses swore positively to this fact, and also stated that they had, before the accident occurred, frequently drawn the attention of the defendant's servants to the dangerous state of the particular gravel heap which had occasioned the accident.

Mr. Justice Wightman, in summing up, left these questions to the jury—First, were they satisfied that the defendant ever knew that the gravel was in the place where it was? Secondly, if he did so know it, was it negligence and want of due care on his part to leave it there? Thirdly, if they answered the other two questions in the affirmative, were they satisfied that the accident had been occasioned by such negligence?

The jury returned with a verdict for the plaintiff, answering each of these questions in the affirmative, and assessing the damages at 35*l*.

Correspondence.

ARTESIAN WELLS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE BUILDER.

Sir,—It has been publicly announced in the London journals that an artesian well was to be formed in the rear of the National Gallery, in order to furnish water for the fountains in Trafalgar-square. Naturally inquisitive on this subject, I have occasionally visited the chosen site, and watched, at a respectful distance, the progress of the work. I say at a respectful distance, Sir, for there has hitherto been an attempt to mistify proceedings, and the organ of communicativeness appears to have been as chary of the required supply of information, as the chalk beds have evidently been of their supply of water. All the information I can obtain is, that they have sunk the well 300 feet, dipping into the chalk; all that I can see is, an expensive edifice, raised before they were quite certain it would be wanted; and, by the aid of a powerful engine, they have been able to pump up water enough to fill the huge cisterns crowning the new building; and they are now vigorously attacking the subterranean reservoirs in front of the National Gallery, with the intent, I presume, of draining the first well, and thus forming a kind of canal navigation beneath that venerable building. We are not to have an artesian well at all, but the fountains are to play by the aid of steam: they had better have come to terms with one of the water companies. So much for the plea of economy. Perhaps some of your readers will throw a further light on the subject.

Since my former communication a rather curious exemplification of the effects of drainage by main sewers has been thrust upon my attention. Large avenues of trees at Bow have lately perished in consequence of sewers being formed in their immediate neighbourhood; the cause and the effect are equally palpable to the resident inhabitants, although singularly against the draining mania of the day: perhaps "Jenkins' Geology" will explain this. M.

GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE.

GOTHIC TRASH.

Sir,—I am ready to admit that the island where I have had my origin has had the reputation of producing every thing which is barbarous, and that I shall hardly be believed when I claim of the present age any thing which may gainsay the deeply-imbibed belief that no art could emanate from such a remote part of Scandinavia. Yet let my public cry be heard by the builder; and let my almost unheeded remains at Wisby call attention to my claims. Why should the University of Christiania publish, at the expense of government, the architectural remains of the Cathedral of Drontheim (beautiful though they are) and my much earlier efforts in the fourteen ecclesiastic buildings in the city above-mentioned be neglected? Are they too ruinous? Not so. Are the materials, the workmanship, the magnitude and elevation of the edifices contemptible? The reverse. Let not then fashion, ignorance, or prejudice do me injustice. Examine my claims, and pronounce whether the church of All Saints was built in 1030; of the Holy Ghost and St. Lawrence in 1046; St. Drotten in 1086; St. Catherine, with its fane and arches, in 1160; and have any thing to constitute a claim to containing the first pointed arches in Europe.

Perhaps, Sir, I ought to console myself in recollecting that the late Sir John Soane was called the modern Goth, because he made use of a most beautiful order of architecture at the Bank of England in an admirable manner, but which the author of the appellation had not taste to comprehend.—I am, Sir, your barbarous servant, Goth.

From the Island of Gothland, in the Baltic, September 30, 1844.

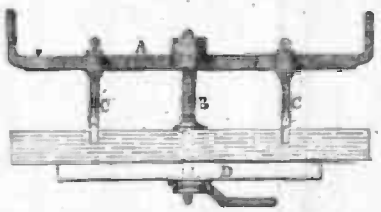
DRAWING INSTRUMENT.

Sir,—In answer to "G. N." of last week, I would say the instrument alluded to is called a Centrolineal, invented by Mr. P. Nicholson, and was improved on by the late Mr. A. Nicholson; it is in form like a T square, with the stock forming an obtuse angle instead of a right line, working round two pins found at certain points, which will draw lines to any vanishing point, 50, 100, or 200 yards off. It is an instrument very little known, but should you wish a further explanation, I will give it. —I remain, Sir, yours, J. W. W., Jun.

44, Stanhope-street, Hampstead-road, Dec. 9, 1844.

MACHINE FOR CUTTING TRACERY.

Sir,—Having some time ago seen an account of tracery being cut by machinery for a new church in London (I think Camberwell), I quite expected some of your correspondents in London would have given us in the country a description of it; but being disappointed, I take the liberty of offering to the notice of your readers, by your permission, one I constructed some time ago for the same purpose.



The annexed sketch shews the method of piercing the plank, A, the cross-bar with handles at the ends. The socket in the centre is dished out at top to receive oil for supplying the screw B, the thread of which should be very fine, which, with the socket in the bar, are steel, hardened to resist the wear by friction. C C, two cutters, one forked, and about $\frac{1}{16}$th longer than the other, which is chisel-pointed and bent, to throw out what is cut by the other. The plank D will be necessary to steady the plank and apparatus when nearly cut through.

If you think this worth inserting in your columns, I will send you the method adopted in chamfering after being cut.—Yours respectfully, James Pickard.

Newport, 1844.

DOMESTIC DRAINAGE.

Sir,—A copy of your valuable journal, containing an article headed "On the Arrangement and Construction of House Drains, by Mr. J. Phillips," was kindly forwarded to me from London by a gentleman high in office, who takes much interest in all matters relating to health of towns and sanatory improvements. I consider the article to be a well-written and valuable contribution, calculated to effect great public benefit, and I have no desire to detract from the merits of its author, but I cannot resist requesting that you will do me the favour, I might almost say the justice, to insert in your periodical, at your earliest convenience, this note, together with my letter to the Commissioners on Health of Towns, on *Tubular Sewering*, which appears in the Appendix of their first Report, and which, although it does not contain all the suggestions that I had the honour to submit to the commission on 17th June, 1843 (these, however, will be found in the body of my evidence), nevertheless contain sufficient to shew Mr. Phillips that he need have been at no loss for information on the subject of *tubular sewerage*.—He says, "As I have found much difficulty in procuring information upon many points which require elucidation, I have ventured as a practical man to throw together a *few thoughts*, being anxious to add my mite to the general stock of knowledge upon this subject." Now, Sir, I think no one can peruse either my evidence or the letter referred to without at once ad-